(d) A proposal is under consideration in the Ministry for setting up of a special mechanism for wildlife trade prevention and control to deal with the poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and its product.

Pollution in rivers

1699. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the present status of pollution of Indian rivers, especially the Ganga and the Yamuna;

(b) what are the details of the Ganga Action Plan which was launched in 1985; and

(c) what is the progress and whether it has achieved the purpose for which this Plan was launched?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) The Biochemical Oxygen Demand levels, an indicator of organic pollution in the river, are high for major rivers of India as against the bathing quality criteria of 3 miligram per litre. For river Ganga, the Biochemical Oxygen Demand shows levels higher than bathing quality in the stretch from Kannauj to Varanasi. For Yamuna these levels are violated in the stretch from Delhi (Nizamuddin Bridge) to Etawah.

(b) and (c) 261 schemes of pollution abatement of various categories such as interception, diversion and treatment of municipal waste water, installation of crematoria, river front development works and low cost sanitation etc. were sanctioned under Ganga Action Plan phase I at a cost of Rs. 462.04 crores in 25 class I towns in the three States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. 258 schemes have since been completed which include 32 sewage treatment plants. The total expenditure incurred so far is Rs. 451.70 crore under this programme. With this, out of the 873 million litres per day of domestic waste water targetted for interception, diversion and treatment, a capacity to treat 835 million litres per day of waste water has been created.

Ganga Action Plan Phase II was approved in stages by the Government of India between April, 1993 to October, 1996. About 1861 million litres per day of domestic waste water is targeted for interception, diversion and treatment under this phase. The total sanctioned cost is Rs. 1276.26 crore and this includes the implementation of various categories of schemes as mentioned above in 95

towns in 5 States. A sum of Rs. 369.15 crore has been released to the State Governments so far to assist them in implementation. Capacity to treat 150 million litres per day of sewage has been created so far.

It has been possible to minimise the organic pollution reaching the river Ganga in places where the schemes have been completed and made functional. There has however been an incidental reduction in the level of microbial pollution reaching the river.

Fire in the Forests of Uttaranchal

†1700. SHRI MANOHAR KANT DHYANI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Planning Commission had sanctioned rupees 10 crores last year, after heavy losses in the forests of Uttaranchal due to fire;

(b) if so, whether the Ministry has made available the said amount to Uttar Pradesh after receiving it; and

(c) if so, the details of funds received by Garhwal and Kumaon Mandal, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure has sanctioned additional central assistance of Rs. 10 crores to Government of Uttar Pradesh during 1999-2000 for prevention and control of forest fires. As intimated by the State Government of Uttar Pradesh Rs. 6.6332 crore of the total outlay has been earmarked for the hill areas and Rs. 3.3668 crore for the plain areas of the State.

Seizure of Skins of wild animals

1701. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the estimated value of tiger, leopard and jungle cat skins seized during the last one year and what are the sanctuaries/ areas in the country identified where poaching of wildlife is most rampant;

(b) what, according to the appraisal, if any, made by Government, are the

†Original Notice of the question was received in Hindi.